

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1-20 (Canceled)

21. (Previously Presented) The process according to Claim 22, wherein the lipophilic oxidation solvent is a monocarboxylic acid.

22. (Currently Amended) A process for producing dicarboxylic acids comprising:

(a) producing a dicarboxylic acid by oxidizing a cycloaliphatic hydrocarbon with oxygen or a gas containing oxygen in a reaction medium comprising an oxidation catalyst and a lipophilic oxidation solvent, and

(b) extracting the dicarboxylic acid formed in the oxidation step from said reaction medium in a countercurrent-flow liquid/liquid extraction column using a first extraction solvent in which at least the oxidation solvent and the cycloaliphatic hydrocarbon are insoluble and a second extraction solvent which is the cycloaliphatic hydrocarbon to be oxidized.

23. (Previously Presented) The process according to Claim 22, wherein the reaction medium derived from the oxidation step is fed into the extraction step under given temperature and pressure conditions so as to maintain the cycloaliphatic hydrocarbon in the liquid state.

24. (Previously Presented) The process according to Claim 22, wherein the extraction of the diacids is carried out under given temperature and pressure conditions so as to maintain the cycloaliphatic hydrocarbon in the liquid state.

25. (Previously Presented) The process according to Claim 22, wherein the first extraction solvent is water or an alcohol.

26. (Previously Presented) The process according to Claim 25, wherein the first extraction solvent is water.

27. (Cancelled)

28. (Previously Presented) The process according to Claim 22, wherein the first and the second extraction solvents are fed into the countercurrent extraction column.

29. (Cancelled)

30. (Cancelled)

31. (Previously Presented) The process according to Claim 22, wherein the reaction medium is fed into the extraction column at an intermediate position between the two ends of the column.

32. (Previously Presented) The process according to claim 22, wherein the hydrocarbon is a cycloalkane.

33. (Previously Presented) The process according to claim 22, wherein the cycloalkane is cyclohexane or cyclododecane.

34. (Previously Presented) The process according to claim 22, wherein the solvent is a monocarboxylic acid that is lipophilic in nature, having from 7 to 20 carbon atoms.

35. (Previously Presented) The process according to claim 22, wherein the lipophilic solvent is selected from the group consisting of hexanoic acid, heptanoic acid, octanoic acid, 2-ethylhexanoic acid, nonanoic acid, decanoic acid, undecanoic acid, dodecanoic acid, stearic acid (octadecanoic acid), 2-octadecylsuccinic acid, 1,5-ditert-butylbenzoic acid, 4-tert-butylbenzoic acid, 4-octylbenzoic acid, tert-butyl hydrogen orthophthalate, a naphthenic acid substituted with alkyl group, an anthracenic acid substituted with alkyl groups, a substituted derivative of a phthalic acid, or a fatty diacid.

36. (Previously Presented) The process according to claim 22, wherein the catalyst is a transition metal.

37. (Previously Presented) The process according to Claim 36, wherein the catalyst comprises manganese and the catalyst is used in combination with a co-catalyst comprising cobalt, chromium, zirconium, hafnium or iron alone or in combination.

38. (Previously Presented) The process according to claim 22, wherein the dicarboxylic acids produced are adipic acid, succinic acid, glutaric acid, dodecanedioic acid or a mixture thereof.

39. (Previously Presented) The process of claim 28, wherein the second extraction solvent is fed into the countercurrent extraction column in a direction countercurrent to the first extraction solvent.